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CONSUMERS' GUIDE

MAY 23, 1938

CONSUMERS' GUIDE

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D. E. MONTGOMERY, Consumers' Counsel

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PENNIES, as well as billions of dollars, make news. On May 17, Consumers' Counsel D. E. Montgomery released this statement to the press:

"Due to the failure of bread prices to move down in line with falling ingredient costs, the computed gross margin between the average retail price of white bread in April and the estimated average replacement cost of ingredients has jumped to its highest level since 1921.

"Bread is a major item in the diet of low income families. The behavior of bread prices is a matter of large importance to this great group of people. This is especially true in periods of reduced income among wage earning families.

"With market prices of ingredients in a typical pound loaf of white bread two-thirds of a cent lower than last April and the national average retail price of a pound loaf of white bread one-third of a cent higher, the gross margin between bakers' material costs and the selling price of bread is a full cent greater now than at the same time in 1937.

"Since June 1937 market prices of ingredients have moved down sharply. Yet the average retail price of white bread, after an increase of ½ cent during the first half of 1937, has remained unchanged for 10 months at 8.9 cents per pound. This is the highest average price since 1929. The present replacement cost of ingredients in the typical pound of white bread, as computed in the Department of Agriculture, is the lowest since 1933.

"Despite the stability of bread prices during the past 10 months, retail prices of flour and soda crackers have moved down. Flour prices have dropped to their lowest level since mid-1933. Cracker prices have receded to their mid-1935 level. Cake prices started to move down in December but are at about the same level as in last June.

"Changes in labor costs and in taxes during recent months do not appear to explain the need for the increase in the margin of white bread. Labor costs of baking and delivering bread comprise slightly less than 50 percent of the margin between ingredient costs and the wholesale price of bread and would represent a smaller percent of the margin between ingredient costs and retail prices. Taxes comprise around 2 percent of the margin between ingredient costs and wholesale prices.

"Average hourly earnings of all employees in the baking industry, as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, were 61 cents an hour in March 1938, the latest period for which information is available. The March rate was slightly higher than in last June and about 9 percent above March 1937. These changes in hourly earnings would seem to account for only one-fifth of the 20 percent increase in margin from March a year ago. It is noteworthy that hourly earnings of labor in the baking industry in February and March had already shown some decline from the levels reached at the end of 1937.

"Bakers repeatedly have refused to furnish cost information to the Consumers' Counsel in the past when prices appeared to be out of line with changes in ingredient costs. During the latter part of 1935 detailed questionnaires were sent to bakers in all cities where price increases were reported in order to determine the cost changes on which such increases were based. In practically all cases where increases were made bakers refused to answer the questionnaire. The lack of cooperation on the part of bakers has forced the Consumers' Counsel to rely on estimated ingredient costs computed by the Department of Agriculture and on estimated labor costs from data prepared by other Government agencies.

"Lower ingredient costs are reflected in the annual income statements of at least two leading bakers, even though they have not shown up in lower retail prices.

"Two of the major wholesale baking companies wrote off amounts totaling $654,000 in their 1937 income statements to cover the reduction to market levels of the value of raw material inventories and purchase commitments. No writedown was necessary in the case of another of the large baking companies, because, according to a report, inventories were already valued close to the market level.

"Profits in 1938 for three of the four major bread baking companies, are running considerably above profits in 1937. The total net profits of these four companies in the first quarter of 1938 were almost double earnings a year ago, and larger than profits during the same three months in each of the past four years.

"Large bread producers in the United States have a dominant position

[Concluded on page 18]

Looking Ahead

on the Consumer Program

"Consider the consumers in the land who neither buy nor spend," urges Consumers' Counsel D. E. Montgomery in discussing here the responsibilities and opportunities ahead for organized consumers

WHY consumers as a whole do not consume enough either to satisfy their own needs or to keep the wheels of industry turning is the question of the day. That it is not a new question, we all know. It is the question we all began to ask in 1930 and continued to ask more insistently as the depression wore on.

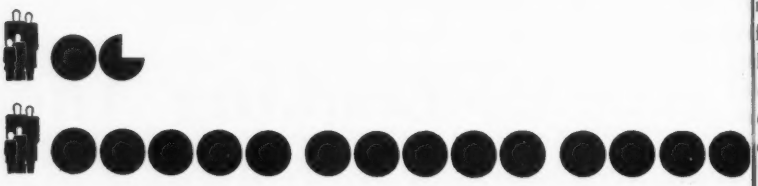
Strangely enough it appears now that it is a question we should have been asking during the years which we once looked upon as the years of our greatest prosperity—the decade of the 20's. Exhaustive analysis of price, income and production factors by at least two great research agencies into the economy of those prosperous years tell us plainly enough that even then we were "out of balance." It seems that this fact was not recognized during the 20's because we were able to tap, for a time, sources of consumer purchasing power which kept things going. We loaned capital funds abroad which the foreign borrowers spent here in our markets. We withdrew paper profits from a rising stock market, spent them in part for consumer goods. We borrowed at a faster and faster rate against future consumer income by means of the device which we call "installment buying."

Looking backward now I think we can see that these helps were only temporary and were not part and parcel of the system by which we live. The underlying fact seems to be that ever since the war prices and consumer incomes have been out of balance, with the result that large numbers of our population have been unable to perform the important economic role that is assigned to them as consumers. They buy not, neither do they spend. During the depression years that followed after 1929 this disadvantage of the consumer became worse, not better. During the recovery which began in 1933 some improvement in basic price relationships took place, but at best it has been no more than enough to bring us back to the already unbalanced situation of 1929. Today with depression forces again asserting themselves the economic paralysis of our consumer function grows more severe.

The volume of consumers' goods manufactured is the best single index telling us how we have been performing as consumers. From a level of 100 in 1923 this index, on a per capita basis, moved up to 110 in 1929 with the aid, no doubt, of conditions which created for a time additional consumer purchasing power. By 1932 it had fallen to 76, compared with 100 in 1923, and by 1937 it had returned to about the same level as in 1923, but was still 8 percent lower than in 1929. Now it has turned downward again and in February of this year stood at 85 or 22½ percent below the level of 1929.

● DISTRIBUTION and service industries have been occupying a larger and larger place in our total economy. It has been estimated that while the total man-years of employment furnished by United States industry increased 16 percent from 1920 to 1929, the increase in employment in basic productive industries was only 3 percent. During the same period the man-years of employment in wholesale and retail trade, personal and professional serv-

CHICAGO FAMILIES HAD THIS TO SPEND FOR OTHER THINGS AFTER PAYING FOR FOOD AND SHELTER



Each circle represents $100

Out of these average sums per family had to come (in 1935–1936) all the other necessities of living for a year, such as clothing, medical care, education, recreation. (Data for this chart and the one opposite, from an Analysis of the "Consumer Purchase Survey," prepared by the Curtis Publishing Co.)

ices, government services and the like increased 46 percent. The proportion of the total employed in these service industries was 30 percent in 1920 and 38 percent in 1929. It increased further to 42 percent during the depression and recovery years.

The Census of Occupation shows that persons employed in trade and transportation increased from 17½ percent of all persons gainfully employed in 1920 to 20½ percent in 1930. That 10-year increase in the ratio was more than twice as great as that which took place between 1890 and 1920. At the same time a very rapid increase in the proportion of persons employed in clerical, professional, and public occupations took place between 1920 and 1930.

● MARKETING experts generally agree that distribution costs have been on the increase. Some interesting explanations for this are advanced. Excess capacity in production industries is referred to by one authority as a cause of rising distribution costs. The argument is that manufacturers with excess productive capacity on their hands increase their sales efforts and therefore their costs of distribution in order to capture what market there is. In other words, because consumers cannot buy what our manufacturers can produce, a condition of increasing distribution costs results which further increases the inability of consumers to buy.

Demands made by consumers for services of every kind are frequently referred to as a source of increased distribution costs. Consumers, it is claimed, want all sorts of extra services along with the products they purchase. They want rapid changes in style. They want to buy in small quantities. They want to buy on trial and to return the goods when they do not like them. And they want to pay at some other time than when they make the purchase. In these ways consumers are responsible for rising distribution costs, according to the standard marketing theory.

● SOME SUSPICION that all this demand for service cannot be laid at the door of consumers alone arises in the minds of people on the consumers' side of the counter. The principle of marketing called selective selling, which means in plain language selling for profit rather than selling for volume, tends to make the patterns of distribution, and likewise its costs, conform to the needs of consumers who can afford to pay more for goods rather than the needs of consumers who are compelled to pay less.

Whatever the reasons may be, there does seem to be a tendency for any given type of distribution to get its start by seeking the patronage of those for whom economy and low distribution costs are an imperative need, and then to shift gradually toward more service, higher distribution costs, and the patronage of the more well-to-do consumers.

● THE "LOGIC" of the increasing cost of distribution seems to run something like this:

1. Wholesalers and retailers must earn a profit if they are to remain in business.

2. Their profit is derived from that little extra amount which is included in a retail price.

3. To get this little extra amount in the price they must appeal to consumers who have a little extra money to spend.

4. To get this little extra money from consumers who have it to spend, distributors must throw in with the merchandise those little extra attractions in service, convenience or style which win the consumer over.

5. These added attractions impose costs which must be added in, and the little extra amount for profit must be added on top of that.

6. Thus the persistent trend toward more and more service and higher cost, and the shaping of distribution practices to the serving of consumers who have plenty to spend, and the neglect of those who have little.

7. Finally all this is rationalized by saying that consumers demand these things and that the consumer will is the law of trade.

In terms of health and comfort and

the humanitarian side of things, the upshot of this logic of distribution is a tendency to neglect the needs of a very large part of the consuming public. On the economic side its outcome is a tendency to destroy the consumer function of a great part of the population, with results that are repeatedly disastrous not only to them but to everyone else. They buy not, neither do they spend.

● IN THE LAST FEW YEARS a survey has been conducted by three Government agencies which for the first time will show us just how the families of this country consume, or do not consume, the things that go to make up the family living. It is too early yet to state the conclusions of this study in comprehensive terms, but some of the details already brought to light afford striking evidence of the facts of underconsumption in 1935 and 1936.

One analysis affords a striking picture of underconsumption in the City of Chicago. The one-fourth of the families which are at the lowest income levels used more than three-fourths of their total expenditures for food and shelter, not including the furnishing or operation of the home. The one-fourth of the families at the top of the income scale spend half of their total outlay for these necessities. This upper group has on the average $1,400 a year left over with which to run their house and to buy clothing, transportation, medical care and all the other things, but the group at the bottom has only $170 per year per family for all these other expenditures.

Note that the one-fourth at bottom used three-fourths of their expenditures for food and shelter. The extent of their underconsumption is brought out in striking fashion by comparing their expenditures, not with the top group, but with that one-fourth of the population that is second from the top. Family incomes in this second group are not high; they range from about $1,500 a year to about $2,100 a year. This group spends 4 times as much on clothing, 3 times as much for household operation, 7 times as much for furnishing and equipment, 5 times as much for education, and 6 times as much for automobiles and other forms of transportation as is spent by the one-fourth of the families at the lowest income level.

● CONSUMERS who neither buy nor spend act this way, not because they do not need nor could not use these things, but because they are not able to pay for them.

Here then in brief are three general conditions of great importance to consumers:

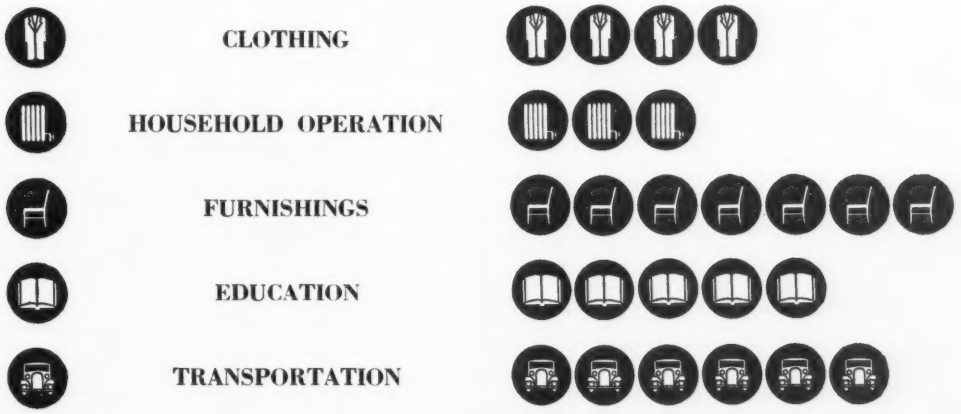
1. The price structure of our economy throughout the entire post-war period apparently has been such that consumers periodically are unable to perform their economic function of buying the things which we produce.

[*Continued on page 18*]

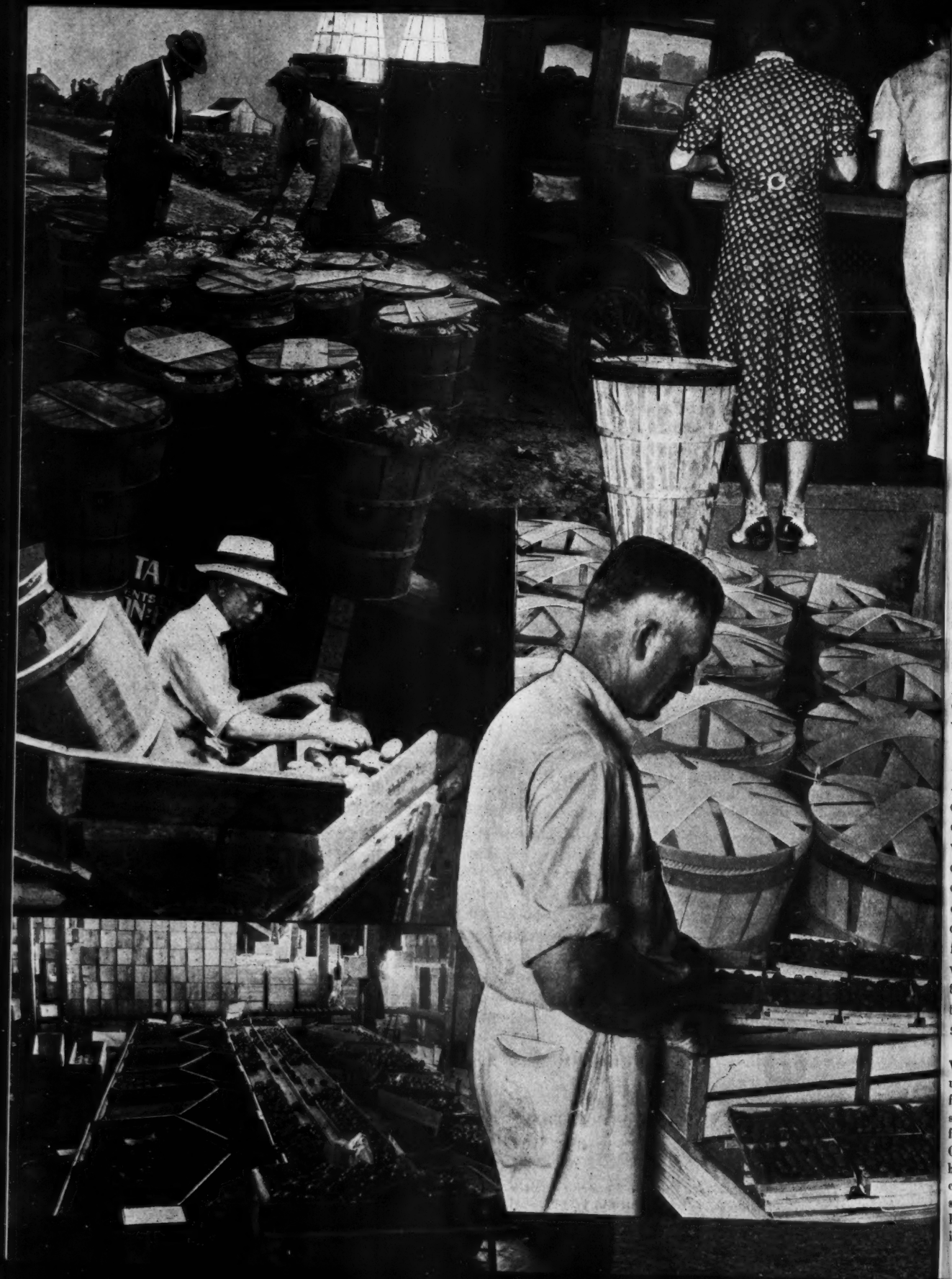
HOW MUCH THEY COULD SPEND FOR OTHER THINGS

For every $1 which 25* out of 100 Chicago families spent on these things.

Another 25 out of every 100 Chicago families could spend this much for the same things.**



***These 25 families were Chicago's poorest quarter of the population, and had yearly incomes of less than $900 each. (1935–1936.) **These 25 families were Chicago's next-to-top quarter of the population, and had yearly incomes of from $1,500 to $2,100 each. (1935–1936.)**



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A Language for Buyers and Sellers [7]

Quality grades for fruits and vegetables give growers and traders a common language to simplify their vast business in these essential foods*

NOT ALL varieties of fruits and vegetables can be marketed successfully. A variety may meet every test for color, taste, and size, but yet be so perishable that it deteriorates before it can be got to market. Another variety may be too large, too small, or off color. Off color may mean only that consumers have their own ideas of the way vegetables should look. In addition to these very good reasons for standardized varieties of fruits and vegetables there is one other reason. It simplifies marketing large volumes if the products are uniform. Under pressure of all these reasons, growers, following the advice of Federal and State departments of agriculture, have developed standard varieties of fruits and vegetables.

Because American consumers dislike the small Italian tomatoes, large American tomatoes have been developed to conform to American preferences. Eastern lettuce growers, faced with the growing popularity of western grown "New York" lettuce—miscalled Western Iceberg—have had to develop a crisp lettuce. Some consumers walk into markets today and ask for Idaho potatoes knowing perfectly well what they want, with the result that growers grow this variety to meet this demand. California oranges are so successfully standardized that 90 percent of them are either one of 2 varieties.

VARIATIONS in human beings make up an exciting world, but a well ordered fruit and vegetable economy requires standardized fruits and vegetables. One form of standardization is grading. Grading may be done in the field by hand and eye, on the farm with crude contraptions, in packing houses by skilled handlers, or in large packing houses by hundreds of employees working alongside motor-driven machines.

Fruits and vegetables were not always a 2 billion dollar industry. A glance at the biographies of fruits and vegetables reveals that many of them until relatively recently were regarded as exotic, or poisonous, or witches' potions, or simply as weeds. Today, fruits and vegetables in increasing numbers are firmly established in the national diet. In recognition of their place in the national diet and the national economy, the Federal Government in 1935 established 2 new Federal institutions devoted solely to research in vegetables: the United States Regional Vegetable Breeding Laboratory at Charleston, South Carolina, and the Great Plains Horticultural Field Station at Cheyenne, Wyoming. Both stations are seeking to develop new strains of vegetables which can best be grown in these regions. Their establishment inaugurates a period of bold scientific experimentation which will very likely result in diets more rich, more varied, and more abundant than consumers have ever dreamed of—that is if marketing techniques can keep pace with scientific advances in plant breeding.

● NO MATTER how marketable are the specimens of fruits and vegetables developed, getting perfect specimens to market is not simply a matter of dropping seeds in the ground and picking U. S. No. 1 grade specimens off the vines. Even dye stamping machines in factories turn out seconds occasionally. To get products of standard quality to market, fruits, and vegetables must be sorted and graded. Since rough handling or careless packing may hasten the deterioration of a fruit or vegetable, they must be picked and packed so that a U. S. No. 1 fruit or vegetable will not deteriorate before it reaches the consumer.

● FROM EARLIEST marketing days there has been some attempt made by growers to grade their product. A farmer with large bright red tomatoes who thought they should command premium prices would call them "premium tomatoes," or "fancy tomatoes," or "best tomatoes." When long distance marketing grew as cities swelled in size, it wasn't enough for a farmer to send his tomatoes forth on a long journey, dubbed with his own quality designation. The farmer might believe that he had produced a premium vegetable but the man to whom he was selling, many miles away, would look skeptical and say, "You don't call those fancy, do you? Where I come from they would be nubbins and we wouldn't even pick them. But," with an eye for a bargain, "I will give you, just to do you a favor now and to take them off your hands, say two bits a

**Third of a series of consumer tours from farm to market with fresh fruits and vegetables. Earlier articles appeared in the April 11, and May 9, 1938, issues.*

basket." All this might be done by telegraph, and the poor farmer, knowing that if he didn't take the two bits a basket he would get nothing at all, grabbed at what he could get.

When the Department of Agriculture started its Market News Service, it soon discovered that prices meant nothing unless they applied to fruits and vegetables of the same quality. But that was impossible because there were no standards of quality.

● NEED FOR STANDARDS for farm products earlier had resulted in a provision in the United States Cotton Futures Act in 1914 and in the United States Warehouse Act in 1916 which authorized the Department of Agriculture to develop standards for farm products and to provide for the inspection of farm products in order to bring about uniform application of grades and to settle disputes. Not until the war, however, was grading extended to fruits and vegetables.

Potatoes were the first of the fruits and vegetables to be graded. During the war the United States Food Administration required all licensed produce dealers to buy and sell potatoes on the basis of U. S. grades. In 1917 a farm products inspection service was established at important distribution centers by the Department of Agriculture and in 1922 it was extended to the points of origin too.

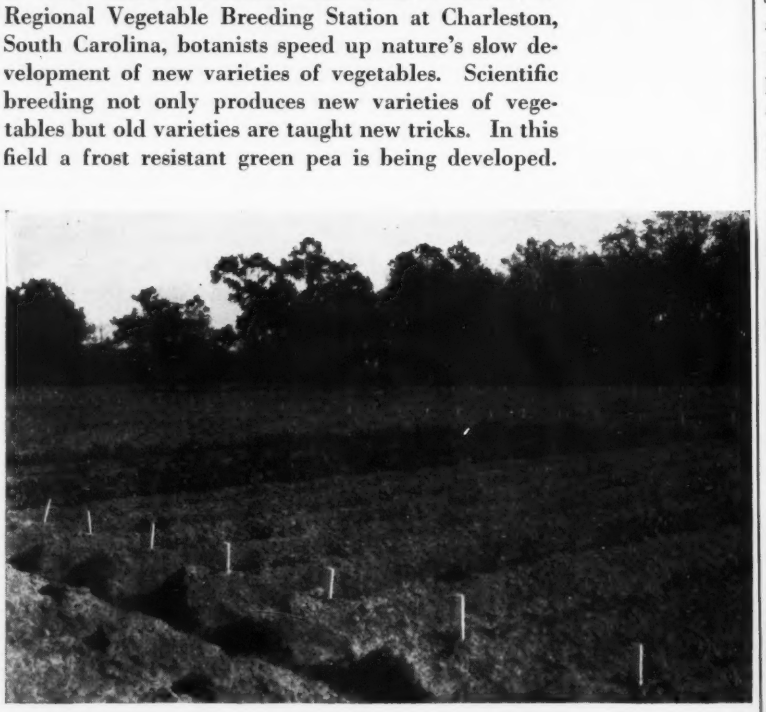
Use of the inspection service is voluntary and is paid for on a fee basis. The existence and the definition of grades have given growers and dealers a language with which they can talk about fruits and vegetables without the possibility of being misunderstood. If disputes arise as to whether a carload of produce is U. S. No. 1 Grade or not, there are always Government inspectors to go in to settle the dispute.

Grades, too, serve other very important purposes. They permit cooperatives to pool the products of their members and to share profits equitably on the basis of the season's sales. Without grades, for example, the Citrus Growers Cooperatives could not operate their growers' pools.

Payment of damage claims by railroads to shippers and growers also are based upon grades. For if fruits and vegetables are damaged in transit, the only equitable basis for the settlement of the claim must rest upon measurable damage. The damage becomes measurable when it is known that a carload of watermelons started out as U. S. Grade No. 1 and then arrived in Chicago in such condition that they had to be graded as U. S. No. 2.

Separate standards have been established by the Department of Agriculture for 55 kinds of fresh fruits, vegetables and nuts. The work of determining just what the grade standards should be is done by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. In defining the grades for a commodity the Bureau studies the actual practices of packers, graders, shippers, and dealers. Dealers' and consumers' preferences, and sometimes their prejudices, are also

IN THE LABORATORIES and fields of the U. S. Regional Vegetable Breeding Station at Charleston, South Carolina, botanists speed up nature's slow development of new varieties of vegetables. Scientific breeding not only produces new varieties of vegetables but old varieties are taught new tricks. In this field a frost resistant green pea is being developed.



consulted and on the basis of all this information, grades are issued.

Deterioration in fruits and vegetables proceeds so rapidly that asparagus that graded U. S. No. 1 one day might develop spreading of the tips and be U. S. No. 2 the following day. Grade designations here might be misleading rather than helpful to the consumer. For potatoes and onions, and perhaps other fruits and vegetables, however, grades would be helpful in steering consumers through markets.

● GRADES ARE BASED upon variety, color, size, maturity, shape, and condition of a product. Except for the effect that damage from handling, disease, or freezing might have on a product, there is no difference in the nutritive value of a grade 1 fruit or vegetable and a grade 2 fruit or vegetable. The difference is based mainly upon appearance and preference. Bright red apples, slightly elongated with the points shapely and well defined, while highly valued and premium priced, are in most cases only handsomer than other apples; they are certainly no more nutritious.

Consumer preferences, it has been noted, enter importantly into the description of grades. Fruits and vegetables with a pleasing exterior appeal to shoppers' appetites—and their pocketbooks. Therefore, appearance is an important grade factor. But it does not necessarily follow that market grades are all that consumers might ask for in consumer grades designed to help them make wise purchases. They might, for example, want the grade to tell them not so much how the product looks as how mature it is or how it stacks up nutritionally speaking. A market grade and a consumer grade do not have precisely the same task to perform, though each of them may be well suited to its particular purpose.

There is no Federal law requiring that the U. S. grades must be used. Many States, however, have made the use of grades compulsory. Sometimes State grades differ from U. S. grades but most of them are the same.

For head lettuce, by way of illustration, there are 4 grades: U. S. Fancy, U. S. No. 1, U. S. Commercial, and U. S. No. 2. A shipment of lettuce goes to the top of the class with a U. S. Fancy grade when the heads are well formed, well trimmed, and free from such defects as tipburn and brown blight. Not more than 10 percent can be below the requirements of the grade and of this amount not more than 2 percent can have slimy soft rot. For U. S. No. 1 the lettuce heads must fulfill the same requirements except that they need not be as well formed, as well trimmed, or as firm. To get a grade as U. S. Commercial, the lettuce again must approximately meet the requirements of U. S. No. 1, except that tipburn is permitted if it is not serious. Getting by in the lowest grade, U. S. No. 2, however, is relatively simple compared to passing the other grades. Passing here does not require that the lettuce be firm, fresh or well trimmed. Damage, wilting, freezing, and disease are permitted if it is not serious, and decay can affect up to 10 percent of the entire shipment.

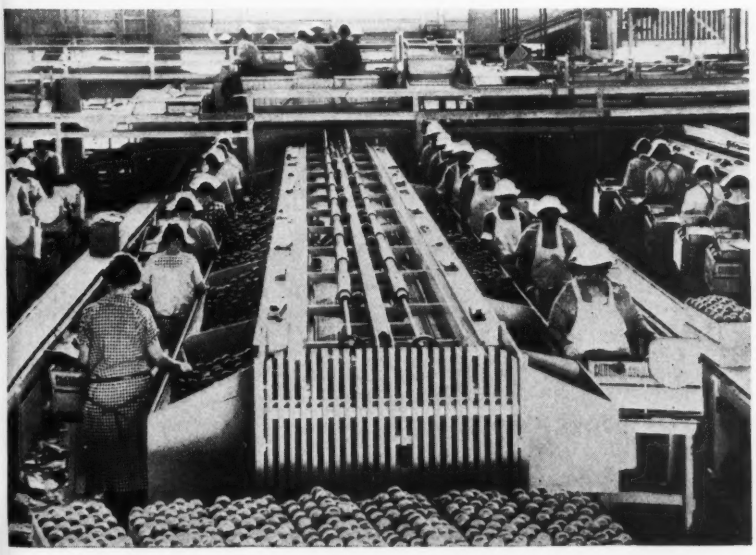
● FROM THE TIME fruits and vegetables begin to ripen everything that is done to them is done with an eye to their marketing. Picking in this process becomes critical. Fruits and vegetables picked too ripe deteriorate before they get to market; picked too green, they never ripen properly. To determine when some fruits and vegetables should be picked a pressure tester has been developed that looks like a large hypodermic needle.

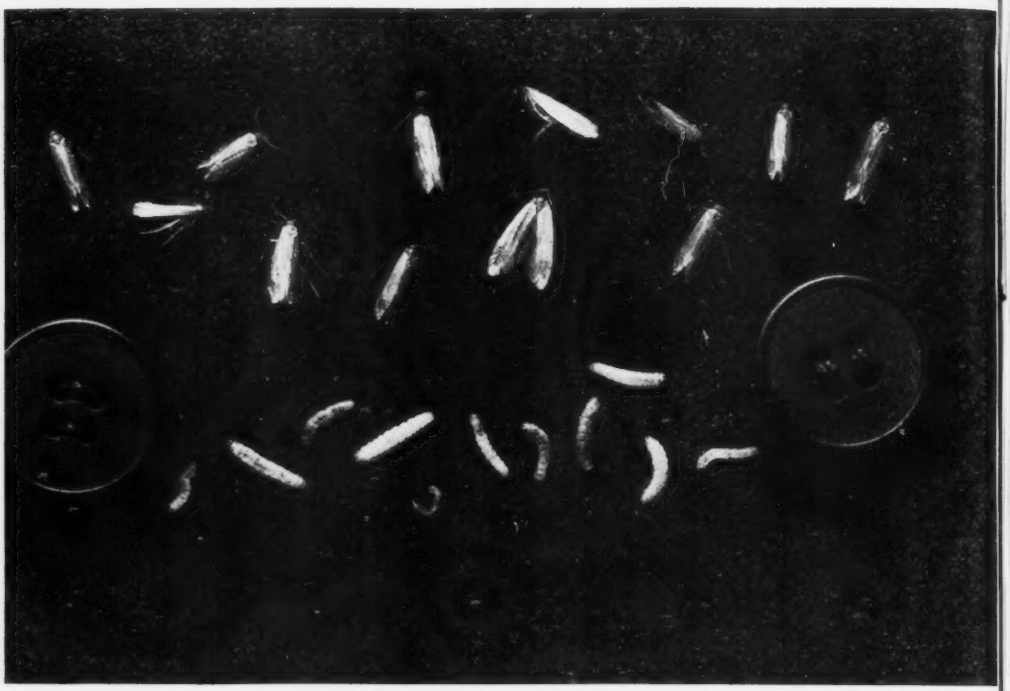
Since fruits and vegetables are softer when they are ripe than when they are green, measuring the amount of pressure needed to force a plunger into the fruit is an indication of its maturity. Peaches, pears, and apples have their maturity measured by this kind of shot in the arm. Grape growers tell whether their grapes have come of age by another device which measures sugar content. So important is proper maturity in fruits that in some States laws forbid their shipment to market unless they have reached what might be called their majority. AAA marketing agreements and orders are also being used to eliminate shipments of immature fruits and vegetables.

Fruits and vegetables are a big business. And the effects of big business

[*Concluded on page 19*]

APPLES, people might think, never see the inside of a factory except in box lunches, but here is an apple "factory" where apples are sized by machine, wrapped and placed in crates by women on the production line, and then wheeled away to another machine that nails tops on the crates with one cracking motion.





MEET the white worm with the black head which given a chance will take free meals from your winter coat. Grown to full size it turns into a buff-colored moth. Larvae and adult moths shown here are $1\frac{3}{4}$ natural size.

Scotching Wool-Eating Insects

For household economy keep an eagle eye out not only for moths but carpet beetles

CARPET beetles and clothes moths—these two wool-eating insects invite themselves into your home with warm weather, seeking dark secret places in which to deposit their eggs. The nap of clothing, the pile of rugs, furniture upholstering, cracks in floor and behind baseboards are among their favorite spots. In warm days the eggs hatch in less than 2 weeks, and the young larvae begin to look for food. Their favorite menu is one of wool, but they may vary this with other animal substances such as hair, bristles, fur, or feathers. The carpet beetle larvae will also eat mealy and floury foods.

Storing these articles during the hot weather is the best way to prevent these insects from feeding on household furnishings and clothing. If woolens are packed away clean in tightly closed bags, chests, trunks, or closets containing flake naphthalene or paradichlorobenzene crystals they are reasonably safe from a clothes moth and carpet beetle raid. Packing away furniture and rugs that are needed the year around presents problems. Carpet beetles will not hestitate, if they have a chance, to feed on the rug on your floor and hair or feather stuffing in your big chair. These insects go through 3 stages—the egg, the larval and pupal stage—before they mature into a hardshell beetle with a broad oval body about $\frac{3}{16}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch long. Sometimes they are brown or black in color and sometimes, depending on the species, this body color is concealed by many colored scales.

Like the clothes moth, it's in the larval stage that beetles do their destructive work. During this growing period, they molt 6 to 10 times casting off shell-like skins. After each molting they have a healthy appetite and eat avidly. Then they are apt to crawl away to a dark corner, often behind baseboards and quarter rounds, or in floor cracks to rest for a while. It's this habit of getting well out of reach and out of sight that makes carpet beetles more difficult to control than clothes moths.

Larvae of the clothes moth camp in their own pantry. They spin a shelter

of silken threads for themselves and feed away. Webbing as well as holes in woolen clothing is proof positive that moths have enjoyed themselves. The carpet beetle's calling card is merely an unsightly hole.

When you eliminate the hiding places of these pests, you have gone a long way towards controlling them. Watch for cracks and crevices in the floor and around the baseboard, then fill them.

Spraying floor cracks and wall crevices with oil-pyrethrum sprays kills some of the insects—but a spray must be used persistently to bring results, as it kills only the insects it hits.

Rugs that run to the wall and are tacked down make splendid hiding places along the baseboard. To be kept free from hungry larvae, rugs should frequently be brushed and vacuum-cleaned on both sides. The dust that comes from them should be taken from the house and burned.

● ONE PIECE of upholstered furniture is often chosen by carpet beetles as their horn of plenty. Hand spraying the chair will do little good unless the sprayer is equipped with a special device such as perforated needles, which will carry the spray into the interior of the upholstery. If a chair is infested, it's probably wiser and safer to send the piece to a fumigating plant to do the job thoroughly.

Fumigating a room or the whole house is the best way to rid the place of beetles, if they are really doing serious damage. The gases used in fumigating are poisonous, so it's always advisable to have a professional do the job. Of course, if beetles have an easy time entering the house they will come back again after fumigation.

● WHEN STORING away woolens and furs, take care that you are not storing away eggs or larvae of clothes moths and carpet beetles, too.

All articles that are not to be washed or dry cleaned should be thoroughly brushed and sunned if sunlight does not fade their color. Larvae usually drop to the ground when exposed to the sun, and the soft eggs are easily crushed by thorough brushing. When brushing, always pay particular attention to the insides of pockets and seams.

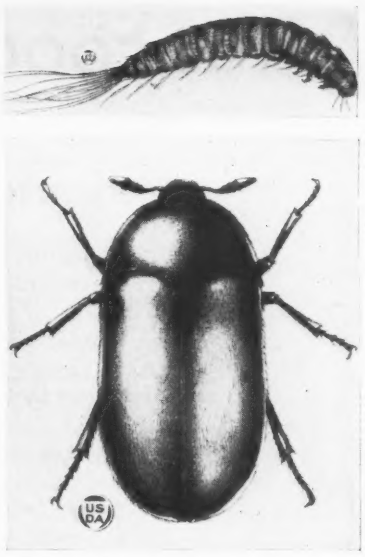
If clothes, freed from eggs and larvae, are put away in tightly closed containers so that no moths or insects can get to them, they will come out holeless for winter use. It's safer, though, to store them away with a chemical which kills both moths and carpet beetle larvae. There are many products on the market for which moth-killing claims are made. Those containing arsenic are not recommended by the Department of Agriculture. The most effective chemicals for destroying these pests are naphthalene and paradichlorobenzene. Many of the effective commercial products use one of these two chemicals as a base. You can also buy flake naphthalene and paradichlorobenzene by the pound.

One pound of either to each 100 cubic feet of very tight closet is sufficient for the hot summer months. Four ounces are generally enough for a trunk, though it's best to use a pound because of the variation in leakage. The fumes given off by these chemicals stop the larvae from feeding and in time the concentration of fumes kills them. To be effective, chest, trunk, or closet must be kept tightly closed so the fumes cannot easily escape.

● THE MARKET is flooded with so-called moth killers—effective and otherwise—which make elaborate claims for snagging this pest whose favorite diet is the family wardrobe. During the past year alone the Food and Drug Administration collected 258 preparations for the control of clothes moths—many of which were found to be absolutely useless when used as directed.

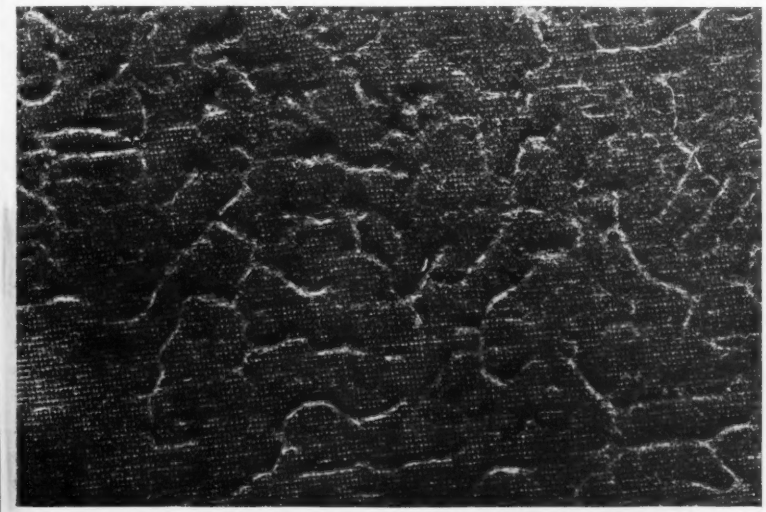
One authority says that a good way

[*Concluded on page 16*]



THE LARVA of the black carpet beetle (top) lives in dark crevices, only crawling out to feed. When it's full-grown (lower) and no longer has a yen for your living-room rug, it basks in the sun on your windowsill or on the flowers in the garden.

THIS happens to be the side of a chair. If left undisturbed clothes moth larvae will build a labyrinth like this and feed away.



12 Your Food Supplies and Costs

HIGHLIGHTS

Cantaloup supplies increase sharply in June when California shipments are at their peak.

Vegetable prices are lowest in the summer months.

Expect butter prices to hit bottom in June.

Oranges are retailing at a third less than a year ago.

Margin between the average retail price of white bread and the wholesale cost of ingredients in a typical pound loaf is the widest since 1921.

ALL FOODS Another slight increase (1 percent) occurred in food costs from March to April but their general level continues around 1935's food prices. Fresh fruits and vegetables and meats were the only food groups which advanced in cost.

Average cost of the food items in the workingman's market basket on April 12 stood at 79.4 percent of their 1923–25 level. This was 7 percent under a year ago, 32 percent above the low point of April 1933, but 21 percent below April 1929.

Costs of all groups of foods continued under a year ago. Decreases ranged from 1 percent for the group of cereals and bakery products, to 23 percent for fresh fruits and vegetables as a group.

FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES Most fresh fruits and vegetables increase seasonally in supply during June. With the exception of cabbage, celery, onions, and potatoes, vegetable prices hit bottom in the summer months. Lowest prices for potatoes, cabbage, onions, and celery come in October when the harvest of the late crops of these items reaches its height.

Melon season gets into swing in June. Cantaloup shipments increase sharply as peak California supplies move to city markets. First honeydew and honeyball melons appear. Watermelons are more plentiful. Watermelons, honeydews, and honeyballs are usually most abundant, and therefore cheapest, in July; cantaloups in August.

Market supplies of blackberries and cherries are heaviest in June. First figs and apricots move to market and shipments of peaches, plums and green corn increase sharply. Season for asparagus, strawberries and grapefruit, however, draws near its end.

Price increases from March to April were confined to potatoes, lettuce, carrots, apples and lemons. Cost of fresh fruits and vegetables in general in mid-April was 23 percent under a year ago and the lowest for this month since 1933. Retail prices of apples, oranges, potatoes and green beans are a third less than a year ago while cabbage and onions are slightly higher.

MEATS Prices continued moving up from March to April with major increases in beefsteaks and fresh pork. Bacon and veal cutlets were the only items to drop in price. Cost of meats as a group has jumped about 4½ percent since hitting bottom in February—half of the advance coming in the month ending April 12. Meat prices, however, are 15 percent under their peak last fall, and 3 percent below last year.

Despite recent increases retail prices of all beef, pork and lamb cuts are lower than last April. Smallest price declines are in fresh pork and largest in beef roasts and steaks. Retail meat prices are expected to continue less than a year ago.

BEEF Better grade cattle supplies may not be much larger than last June, but slaughter after June will be considerably bigger than in 1937. No further upswing in prices is in prospect until the late summer and fall at which time prices usually go up. Beef prices are expected to remain under their 1937 level during the summer and fall.

PORK Hog slaughter usually is smallest during summer months. Stor-

age holdings of pork and lard accumulated during months of heavy slaughter tend to fill the gap left by this seasonal reduction in slaughter. Slaughter from May through September probably will be much heavier than a year ago. But total pork supplies may not differ much from 1937 due to relatively small storage stocks.

LAMB Larger supplies than in 1937 are in prospect for June. More spring lambs but less grass fat yearlings are expected. Favorable weather conditions have aided development of the early lamp crop. Retail lamb prices usually are highest from May through July and then move down until they hit bottom in December.

CANNED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES Costs have declined slowly each month since last summer. In mid-April they were 5 percent under a year ago. Canned corn is about a tenth lower, while peas, tomatoes and string beans have dropped a little more than half that amount. Peaches, pineapple and asparagus are the only canned items higher in price than a year ago. Stocks of canned vegetables on April 1 were considerably larger than a year ago with sharpest increases in string beans and corn.

DRIED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES Lower bean prices have been the major factor behind the sharp downswing since last summer. Average cost of all items is 22 percent under last April.

FATS AND OILS Lard prices continue to tumble and in mid-April were a fifth less than a year ago. Since last fall the average cost of all fats and oils has dropped 14 percent, and is the lowest for April since 1934. Prospective heavy hog slaughter this fall, coupled with large supplies of cottonseed oil, point to relatively low prices for fats and oils.

DAIRY PRODUCTS Butter prices usually hit bottom in June. Production has been heavier than in 1937 and the low point in prices probably will be under both 1936 and 1937.

All dairy products declined in cost from March to April. Reductions were small except in butter and cheese. Retail prices of cheese and evaporated milk are about 5 percent less than in 1937, while butter is down twice that amount. Milk and cream, however, are slightly higher than a year ago. Average cost of all dairy products in mid-April was about 2 percent under a year ago and the same amount under mid-March.

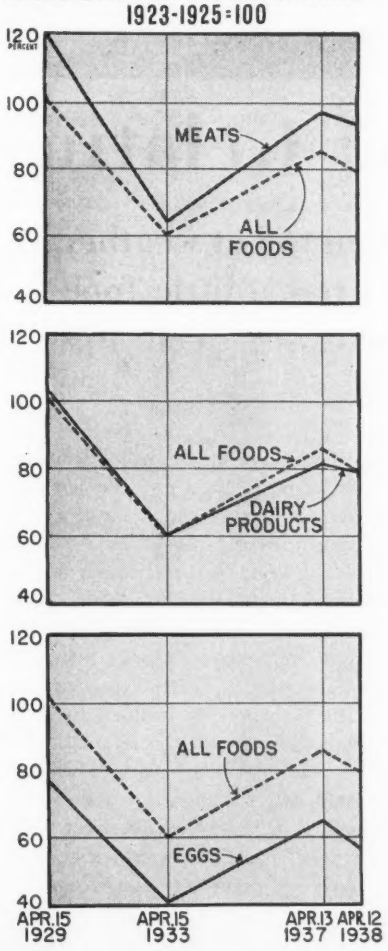
EGGS Low point in prices appears to have been passed and an upswing is in prospect until November or December. Supplies during the remainder of the year probably will be smaller than a year ago.

Retail prices declined only slightly from March to April, but were 12 percent less than a year ago. Eggs are selling at the same level as in 1936.

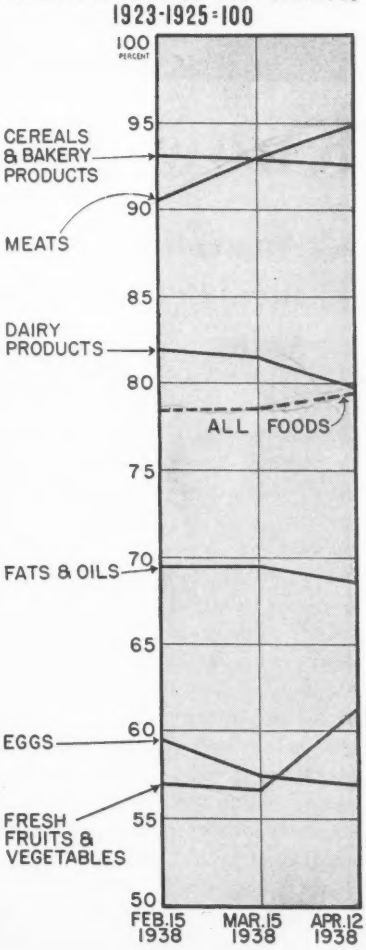
POULTRY Prices appear to be at or close to their peak and a downswing is in prospect during the last half of the year. Broiler marketings usually increase sharply in June and first fryers, chickens weighing 2½ to 3½ pounds, move to market. Prices of old roosters generally are cheapest from May through July. Retail prices of roasting chickens in April were the highest for this month since 1930, and 12 percent above a year ago.

CEREALS AND BAKERY PRODUCTS White bread prices remained unchanged at the highest level reached since 1929 despite a further reduction in retail flour prices. In April white bread was 3 percent higher than a year ago, while flour was 17 percent cheaper. Average cost of all cereal and bakery products in April was slightly under 1937.

A PERSPECTIVE OF FOOD COST CHANGES
1923-1925=100



A CLOSE-UP OF FOOD COST CHANGES
1923-1925=100



Know Your Gelatins

An aesthetic addition to hot weather meals gelatin adds, too, a little food value to the dishes it decorates

DRESSING up your dinner table is one way of rousing family interest in the domestic menu, and the use of gelatin in combination with other foods can bring sparkle and color to the drabbest looking of meals. Gelatin is the decorative food. Gelatin deserts—fruit flavored and tinted—lend color in a hundred different shades and shapes to the dinner table. Fresh vegetable and fruit salads give a new slant to a meal when they are enclosed in clear gelatin moulds. Cold meats are oftentimes served in a coat of shimmering gelatin. Soup and bouillons are made thicker and richer with the addition of gelatin powder. . . This dress-up food is a decorative and useful boon to modern homemakers even as it was a boon to their grandmothers who knew gelatin as "calves' foot jelly."

From a nutritional angle gelatin does not rank among the top-notchers. Though it is 85 percent protein, it is not efficient as a body-builder because it lacks some of the essentials of proteins which contribute to body growth and health. Scientists rate it as an "incomplete protein"; they say that when gelatin is eaten to supplement the efficient body-building proteins found in such foods as eggs, cheese, and milk, it supplies nutritional assets which the body might otherwise miss. They term it a dietary reenforcement. But generally gelatin is eaten in such small quantities as to get little recognition from most diet experts.

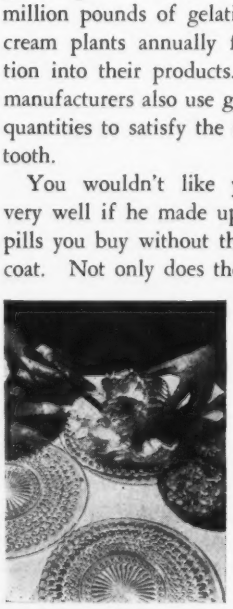
Gelatin's strongest bid to dietary fame comes in its easy digestibility. For that reason it is often fed to invalids or convalescents. Some experts believe it to be effective in aiding digestion of "heavy" foods, but difference of opinion has left this a moot question. In infant feeding, it is thought to modify the formation of curds in cow's milk, making the milk more digestible and easier for the system to absorb.

TEMPERATURE and time, as well as the concentration of the gelatin, condition the stiffness of a jelly. A 2 percent gelatin solution congeals best at 59 degrees (F.) or below.

● SCIENCE has peered further into the mysteries of this animal product and found still other uses for it. The bacteriologist, working with chemical "soups," knows that bacteria will multiply more rapidly in gelatin than in most other foods; he uses it often in the laboratory in colonizing a batch of germs for experimental purposes. When you have your picture snapped, your image might almost be said to have been "gelatinized"; a basic ingredient of the sensitive photographic film is gelatin.

Most ice cream manufacturers put gelatin into their product. They say without it the ice cream would melt more easily; would contain a good deal of crystallized ice; wouldn't hang together quite as well as it does. Five million pounds of gelatin go into ice cream plants annually for incorporation into their products. And candy manufacturers also use gelatin in large quantities to satisfy the nation's sweet tooth.

You wouldn't like your druggist very well if he made up some of the pills you buy without the soft gelatin coat. Not only does the gelatin hold



the pill's ingredients firmly together; it destroys much of the bad taste.

● MANUFACTURE of gelatin is hardly more than an elaboration of the process used by our grandmothers when they boiled beef bones to thicken soups or to make homemade gelatin. Chemically, it is termed the offspring of the protein *collagen,* found in animal bones and tissues. In making gelatin, these meat packing-plant by-products are soaked for almost three weeks in a mild acid to remove mineral matter, grease, and phosphates. Then, for another six weeks, they are immersed in a lime bath to purify them and to prepare them for the cooking vats. They are next put into two large vats for two or three "cookings" where boiling water gradually reduces the purified bone tissue and skins to gelatin which is drawn off, cooled, dried in large sheets, and sliced up, or pulverized into the powder sold to consumers.

Production of gelatin in this country is today a major industry. Some packing houses have their own plants to manufacture this valuable byproduct; others sell to private firms. Production reached almost 23,000,000 pounds last year—approximately an 8,500,000 pound increase over production in 1932.

● SPOTTING a good gelatin is largely a matter of experience with various brands. Commercial users of the product have developed intricate laboratory mechanisms to test its jelly strength, viscosity, bacteriological content, and other properties. But the housewife can be sure she is using a good product if the gelatin she makes with the powder is practically odorless, and transparent. Most gelatin factories today take care that their gelatin products leave their hands in a sanitary condition. Gelatins that are attacked by bacteria soon decompose and in other ways show signs of contamination. When a gelatin dish is made, it should be kept in the refrigerator or ice box. Wandering bacteria in the air do not hesitate to take up abode and colonize on exposed gelatin. Tests for odor in the gelatin should be made while the product is still hot. And remember that gelatins can be high-strength or low-strength; a small quantity of one brand might make as strong a jell as a large amount of another. Only by household tests can the housewife learn on which brand her pennies will go furthest.

● ONE ECONOMY hint in buying gelatin is to purchase it whenever possible in the bulk. Sheet gelatin is the cheapest kind and can be bought in bulk. Sometimes sheet gelatin is cut into strips and sold in large sized packages. Cooperatives, institutions, or any groups who have access to the wholesale market will find that they can make sizeable savings in purchasing gelatin in these forms. The individually packaged product is most often in a pulverized form which can be prepared with slightly more ease than the sheet or strip kind.

Flavored jelly powders—requiring only water to make an appetizing dessert—contain only about 10 percent pure gelatin, the remainder being sugar, citric acid, synthetic and natural fruit flavors, and coloring. Some housewives prefer to make jellied desserts at home merely by mixing fruit juices and sugar with the gelatin. Unless the flavored commercial kind has been made with concentrated fruit juices — and few commercial kinds are—its food value is limited to the small amounts of gelatin and sugar present.

Gelatin dissolves better in hot water after being soaked in cold water. Sheet and shredded gelatin must be soaked longer than the granulated type. Add sugar, flavorings, and seasonings after the gelatin is dissolved completely. If fruits or vegetables are to be added, they should be put into the gelatin as dry as possible and just after the gelatin has begun to congeal.

Fresh pineapple and gelatin will not mix because an enzyme in the pineapple liquefies the gelatin. Heating the pineapple in boiling water will destroy the enzyme.

Beating the gelatin solution after it has become thick and stiff—but not stiff enough to cause the edges to break apart—will result in a foamy mixture and will double its volume. Whipped cream or egg white should be added when the solution is at the right thickness; both a too thin and a too thick solution will result in an incomplete mixture.

A good jelly will result if about 2 percent of the whole solution is gela-

GELATIN'S big claim to a place in the diet is its usefulness in brightening up and adding variety to diets. It is also used to improve the texture of many foods.

tin. An easier kitchen guide is to use ½ tablespoon gelatin (in the granulated form) to each cup of liquid. If you prefer the sheet or strip form, you can get just as good results as with the granulated type by weighing it to match an equal amount of the granulated gelatin.

Stiffness of the jelly depends not only on the concentration of the gelatin, but also on the temperature at which it is prepared and the length of time it is allowed to jell. A gelatin maintained at a temperature of 35 degrees centigrade (95 degrees Fahrenheit) or above will not jell at all. Best results are secured when the temperature is 15 degrees centigrade (59 degrees Fahrenheit) or below. The lower the temperature, the more rapidly the solution jells.

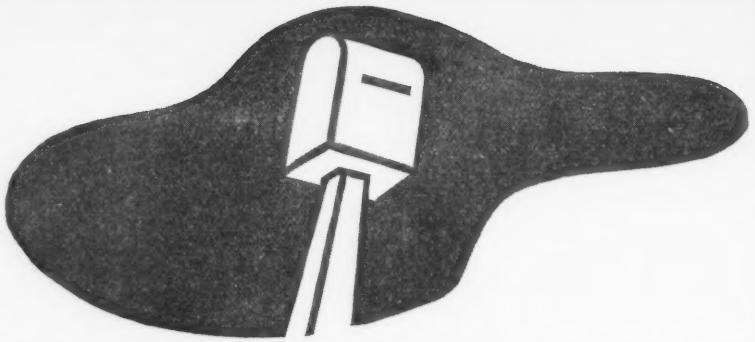
Once a jelly has formed, it can be heated to a temperature several degrees above that at which it jelled without liquefying. Even after a jelly has been liquefied, it can be re-jelled without any harm to its original quality.

SCOTCHING WOOL-EATING INSECTS

[*Concluded from page 11*]

to spot fake moth-control preparations is to examine the label and directions carefully and critically. The preparation should be frowned upon if it claims to be a repellent, if it claims to drive out clothes moths, if it does not recommend a definite dosage, and if its use is not restricted to tight containers. The idea that moths can be driven away by the mere odor of a fumigant is a domestic fallacy. And what holds for fumigants holds also for the smell of cedar or pine oil, tar paper, cedar closets, etc.

For more information about the habits and the best way to protect your possessions from these insects see *Pack Away Your Winter Woolens,* CONSUMERS' GUIDE, Vol. III, No. 7, or write to the Superintendent of Documents for the U. S. Department of Agriculture Leaflet No. 145, "Clothes Moths," and Leaflet No. 150, "Carpet Beetles." Each is 5 cents.



CONSUMERS' MAILBOX

OUR SOAP ARTICLE, March 28, 1938, brings forth two pertinent queries. First, from a County Home Demonstration Agent in Utah: "Many of the women with whom I work are making soap for household use. . . The question that I cannot answer completely is, how to remove all odor from fats—not only from those that have become a little rancid, but the natural odor of beef tallow, etc."

Commercial soap makers put thousands of dollars into complicated equipment to make fats odorless by a heat and vacuum process. Deodorizing fats is a necessary step in good soap manufacture. But the soap maker in the home would only be confused by a description of such procedure.

It is not always possible to get rid of all fat odors in the kitchen manufacture of soap, but proper preparation of the fat goes a long way towards attaining this end. All solid matter and other impurities should be filtered from the liquid fat when it is originally prepared. Then, just before the soap itself is to be made, the fat should again be melted (but not at too high a heat) and the remaining impurities allowed to settle out.

Often a dark layer will form at the bottom of the container in this process from which the pure fat should be removed carefully. Another method is to "wash" the fat. Melt it in hot water, stirring slightly a few times. The pure fat will rise to the top of the water, while the impurities will sink to the bottom. The fat should be poured off or removed with a spoon. And, finally, never heat the fat to too high a temperature, and never allow it to scorch.

Second query about soap is from a Texan. "What," he asks, "is green soap?"

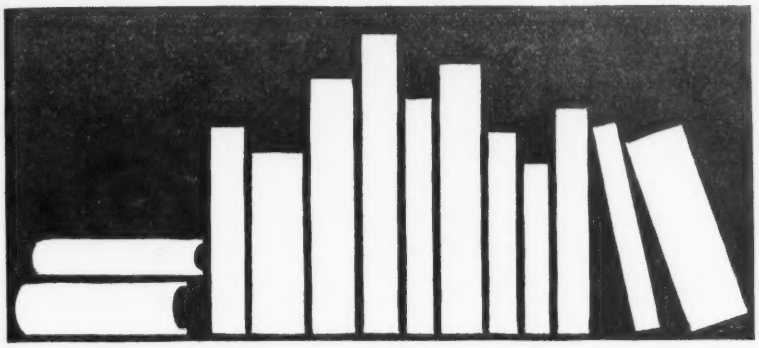
Green soaps found in the home are in most cases artificially tinted. Some olive oil soaps may be naturally green in color, but this is not always true.

What the soap industry calls "green soaps" or "green oil soaps" are rarely found outside of laboratories, hospitals, and textile manufacturing plants. And they are not always green but range from a yellowish green to amber in color. Usually soft, they are made of potash, linseed oil, soybean oil, or corn oil. Readily soluble in alcohol, they are looked upon with favor by medical men and textile manufacturer alike. They rinse off of the skin and fabrics with equal ease.

Tincture of green soaps are ordinary soft green soaps with about a 30 percent alcohol content. Those which meet medical standards are used in hospital operating rooms because of their disinfectant properties. So-called "tincture of green" soaps sold over the retail counter may not be up to hospital standards but are sometimes used in the home because they are soft and often mildly antiseptic.

●

PARKING bacon in the refrigerator in its original paraffin or parchment paper wrapping is O. K., the Iowa State Experiment Station reports. It will keep well for 2 weeks. To store longer, keep bacon in a glass dish at a temperature below 45, and in its own waxed-paper wrapping if the temperature is above 45.



CONSUMERS' BOOKSHELF

COAL CONSUMER DIGEST, news bulletin issued by the Consumers' Counsel of the National Bituminous Coal Commission. Sent free on request. It is the aim of the Consumers' Counsel "to present in the *Digest* information on the work of establishing new minimum prices by the Commission, analyses of marketing rules and regulations, and other pertinent data of interest to consumers." This publication will be issued as the occasion demands.

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR FARM PRODUCTS, by C. W. Kitchen, Assistant Chief, Bureau of Agricultural Economics. 1938, pp. 9, mimeo. Address: Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. Free. An address given before the American National Live Stock Association, Cheyenne, Wyo. Jan. 14, 1938. Traces briefly the development of standards for agricultural products, methods used in determining grades, and some of the advantages from the consumer standpoint of buying graded products.

COURSE OF STUDY ON CONSUMERS' COOPERATION, prepared by Dorothy Houston for the Department of Education, State of Minnesota. 1938, pp. 91. Address: Midland Cooperative Wholesale, Minneapolis, Minn. 25¢. This pamphlet has been prepared in accordance with a recent Minnesota law requiring the teaching of cooperation in the public schools. It contains an outline of a course in cooperation, a bibliography of materials suitable for use in the schools, and a list of governmental and non-governmental agencies supplying information on cooperatives.

EDUCATIONAL METHODS FOR PROMOTING COOPERATION, by Ralph Russell, Associate Agricultural Economist, Farm Credit Administration. Series on Cooperatives No. 9. 1938, pp. 20, mimeo. Address: Division of Agricultural Cooperation, Pan American Union, Washington, D. C. Free. Surveys the purposes, content and the methods of cooperative education in the United States.

TYPICAL NET MONTHLY BILLS FOR ELECTRIC SERVICE IN EFFECT JANUARY 1, 1937, IN CITIES OF 50,000 POPULATION OR MORE, prepared by Bureau of Engineering, Federal Power Commission. 1937 Rate Series A. 1937, pp. 53. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 15¢. Gives the charges for various amounts of electricity to residential, commercial light, commercial power, and industrial consumers in large U. S. cities. Comparative costs are given for 191 cities which include 49 percent of residential users of electricity in the United States. Increases or decreases in charges over the previous year are also shown.

SHOE CONSTRUCTIONS, by Roy C. Bowker, National Bureau of Standards. Circular C419. 1938, pp. 14, illus. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 10¢. Summarizes research work being done at the National Bureau of Standards for the purpose of developing quality and performance standards for shoes in terms of value to the individual consumer. Gives brief descriptions of 40 different types of shoe construction and discusses their classification under 8 main classes. Gives statistics on shoe production for 1935. Reference list.

WHOLESALE MARKETS FOR FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN 40 CITIES, by William C. Crow, Associate Agricultural Economist, Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Department of Agriculture Circular No. 463. 1938, pp. 142, illus. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 15¢. Contains statistical information and descriptive material concerning the wholesale and jobbing markets for fruits and vegetables in 40 principal cities. Points out some of the general principles which need to be considered in improving these markets. Such reorganization would substantially reduce costs of distribution and give better service to farmers, retailers, and consumers.

QUANTITY AND COST BUDGETS FOR FOUR INCOME LEVELS, by the Heller Committee for Research in Social Economics of the University of California. 1938, pp. 95, mimeo. Address: University of California Press, Berkeley, Calif. 75¢. Presents detailed budget estimates to cover the cost of a "health and decency" standard of living for (a) family of an executive, (b) family of a clerk, (c) family of a wage earner, (d) dependent families or children. Prices used in making these estimates are those of San Francisco in October 1937. Also included are sections on "Adequate Food at Low Cost," and "Initial Costs for a New-Born Baby in a Dependent Family."

CLOTHING BUDGETS, by the Heller Committee for Research in Social Economics of the University of California. 1938, pp. 34, mimeo. Address: University of California Press,

Berkeley, Calif. 35¢. This bulletin is a supplement to "Quantity and Cost Budgets for Four Levels in Income" which is listed above. It gives in great detail clothing budget estimates which are presented in summary form in the other publication.

RADIO DIALOGUE

Persons interested in the activities of local consumer groups may wish to have copies of the 15 minute radio dialogues used by the Consumer Conference of Greater Cincinnati over Station WCPO. Copies of scripts may be secured from Mrs. Dennis E. Jackson, President of the Consumer Conference, 144 Louis Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio. Examples of topics available are: blankets, kitchen equipment (2 broadcasts) preventative treatments for moths, dishes, meat grading, canned fish, dresses, and shoes. Charge is 10¢ each. A more extended list of available broadcasts will be furnished on request.

CONSUMERS' COUNSEL ON BREAD

[Concluded from page 2]

in the industry. The recent inquiry of the Federal Trade Commission on agricultural income states that 10 bread and other bakery products companies produced in 1934–1935 about 31 percent of the bread consumed in this country. Three companies produced about 19 percent of total production.

"Reports and charges of coercive practices, together with the extraordinary rigidity of retail bread prices during recent months, suggest the need of far-reaching examination into the price determining factors of this industry. In a period of restricted employment and earning power stabilized bread prices undoubtedly work real hardship upon farm and city families in which bread is an important item of diet. With respect to farmers who grow wheat used in commercial bread flour the high margins now in effect work adversely in two directions—they are receiving a much reduced price for their wheat and are still paying a top price for bread.

"I am therefore submitting to the Secretary of Agriculture at his request such reports and data as are in my possession for transmittal to the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission for their consideration."

LOOKING AHEAD ON THE CONSUMER PROGRAM

[Concluded from page 5]

2. Our distributing trades tend all the time toward meeting the needs of the upper levels of consumers, with the result that services are added, distribution costs are increased, and the needs of a great part of the population which cannot pay for services are neglected.

3. Underconsumption at low income levels seems to be established as a normal feature of our economy, not only imposing great hardships upon families at those levels, but also denying to everyone else the opportunity to produce the things those families need but cannot buy.

● WELL, WHAT OF IT? What can consumers do about it?

Just this. Once upon a time the consumer was a housewife. Then along came home economics and other new things to turn this consumer into a homemaker. Then more recently, other things began to happen and today we find these homemakers out in the market place demanding facts about the goods they buy, and participating through their own leaders and spokesmen in negotiations with retail groups to establish standards and to get those facts.

And now, or very soon from now, consumers must take a further step beyond this job of getting standards established and getting the facts about goods. They must project their field of interest very definitely and deliberately into the subject of prices. For example, they must study the underlying problems of prices and must find out what needs to be done and what can be done to readjust the basic price structure so that our economy can keep

TEST YOURSELF

AN ENTERPRISING teacher of grown-ups in Detroit who are taking a consumer buying course sends us some of the problems he poses to his class:

I

Mrs. Consumer is budgeting her food expenditures for the next 6 months. The question as to how to buy her canned fruits and vegetables presents itself. She would like to work out a way of buying these food products which will give her the greatest possible return for the money she spends without too much of her time and effort. Should Mrs. Consumer:

a. Forget it, and buy her food as she needs it?
b. Buy enough immediately to last her all year?
c. Plan to watch for weekly specials, and buy quantities of each item as it appears?
d. Find out from her grocer what discount he will grant her if she buys a dozen of something from time to time?
e. Make a calendar of the time at which the new packs arrive and plan to buy quantities at the appropriate times?
f. Combine some of the foregoing ideas?

II

From the following sets of statements, choose the ones which most nearly represent your point of view:

a. 1) "I should ask the price each time before buying and compare values."
   2) "I can depend on my store to have the best values."
   3) "Shopping around isn't worthwhile as storekeepers have the same expenses to meet and many prices are fixed."
b. 1) "It is best to check weights and measures very carefully to insure getting the greatest possible value for my money."
   2) Since weights and measures are carefully inspected by governmental agencies, I don't need to pay much attention to them."

itself going and can maintain production in working balance at ever higher levels of total output.

A more immediate task for consumers in this price field is to see to it that costs of distribution do not continue to go up because of continued addition of costly services. By constant education and by repeated assertion they should make clear that it is not the consumer demand that forces these added and costly services upon us. It would be a good idea for consumers to have some facts on just how much these "free" services and conveniences are really adding to the bill they pay.

Let us watch this point on the new demands for facts and standards which consumers are now making upon their merchants. The belief seems to exist in some quarters that giving consumers the facts they are asking for will prove an additional source of profit. Consumers have already seen how the sale of goods by quality grades is turned into a device of retail profit rather than consumer economy when it is used only for the purpose of boosting the premium or top grade product. In this whole field of getting the facts for consumers what is needed is real economy for the retail buyer.

Consumers should be preparing themselves also to support whatever moves may be made, if indeed they are ever made, to establish methods of distribution that will meet the needs of low income families. We need new forms of distribution that will incur only the bare and necessary cost of getting the goods into these consumers' hands. Private industry has taken several bites at this job, but always seems to move away from it again. If private industry remains in default on this very important distribution problem, then we must find other ways of meeting the need. We need additional distribution facilities for the handling of additional goods into additional markets to meet an additional demand that is not now being met. Governments, Federal, State, and local, might do the necessary experimental work to find out how this can be done and whether private enterprise wants to do it, or can do it.

In short, the enlarged field of opportunity ahead of consumers is accepting the responsibility of doing everything possible to wipe out the scourge of extreme, continuing, normal underconsumption. If the people as consumers do not insist that this job be done, then no one else is going to do it.

Do You Know . . .

1. **How much the price of a pound of white bread sold by your grocer has changed in the last year?**
2. **How this price change (if any) compares with changes in the average price for the country over the past year?**
3. **How does the *volume* of consumers' goods manufactured this year compare with pre-depression and depression years?**
4. **What other measures of consumer "prosperity" and depression are there?**
5. **What are two reasons why distribution costs have been advancing?**
6. **What are some of the services your merchants offer you which you would be glad to go without, provided you could get the same quality or quantity of goods at less cost?**
7. **How much money did the poorest quarter of Chicago's population have to spend for things other than food and shelter in 1935–36?**
8. **How can informative labeling be used by consumers to cut the cost of living?**
9. **How might informative labeling be used by merchants to increase profits?**
10. **Why was the quality grading of agricultural products started?**
11. **Whether your State requires agricultural products to be graded?**
12. **How your State grades, if any, compare with Federal grades for the same products?**
13. **What advantages are there in uniform State and Federal grading?**
14. **What can you do to protect your home against carpet beetles?**
15. **How to buy gelatin economically?**

[*Concluded from page 9*]

are apparent all the way back to the farm. It takes more than a farm operator to see his crop off to market. It takes crews of men for harvesting, packing houses full of employees for packing and sorting, and a gang of men for loading. This big business on the farm has had two effects. It has made some farms big businesses, actually, big businesses that are corporations, run with stockholders' money by hired managers and help. On the other hand it has encouraged cooperatives. Individual farmers pool their resources today in cooperatives to supply themselves with the equipment and labor that modern fruit and vegetable farms require.

Crews of experienced pickers harvest fruit and vegetables, haul them to packing houses where culls, the undersized and defective specimens are removed. Then the products are sized, manually by packing house workers lined up along a bench or a conveyor, or by a machine. Usually this machine consists of a moving screen with holes of different sizes in it, the small holes first and then successively larger and larger and larger holes. As the specimens move along the screen they drop through the holes and are automatically sized. Tomatoes, citrus fruits, pears, apples and some other crops are often wrapped by deft packers. Loaded boxes go onto a machine which clamps and nails tops on them in a single operation.

Methods and sequences may differ for crops and regions. Oranges, for example, are washed and waxed in the packing houses, lettuce and celery are usually washed by high pressure hoses in packing houses, onions and cabbage are often graded in the field, but all over the country fruit and vegetables undergo the same general treatment. And too this treatment more and more is becoming specialized and factory like, with the operations taking place on a larger and larger scale, either in cooperative packing houses or in packing houses on large scale farms. The farm, in this, is imitating the factory.

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